



SACHI A. HAMAI  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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June 26, 2015

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
HILDA L. SOLIS  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL  
Third District

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Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

**MOTION TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS WHICH WOULD EXPEDITE THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AT THE VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER; AND AMEND THE COUNTY'S FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA TO ADD A POLICY TO SUPPORT FUNDING AND PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD REDUCE HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS IN THE COUNTY (ITEM NO. 3, AGENDA OF JUNE 30, 2015)**

Item No. 3 on the June 30, 2015 Agenda is a motion by Supervisors Kuehl and Knabe to send a five-signature letter to the County's Congressional Delegation to support legislation which would enable the construction of Permanent Supportive Housing on real property located at the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) West Los Angeles Medical Center and to express the County's support for the use of the Housing First model at the West Los Angeles Medical Center; instruct the County's Washington advocates to support legislation and administrative actions by the Obama Administration and the VA which would expedite the development of Permanent Supportive Housing at the West Los Angeles Medical Center; and amend the County's Federal Legislative Agenda to add a policy to support funding and proposals which would reduce homelessness among veterans in the County, such as by developing permanent supportive housing at VA facilities in the County.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"*

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## **Background**

The motion addresses how Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resources can be utilized through a Housing First model to address the major problem of homelessness among veterans in Los Angeles County. Housing First is an approach for ending homelessness that centers on first providing stable housing and then providing health, mental health, and other supportive services. The Housing First model and permanent supportive housing – long-term housing assistance linked with supportive services – are complementary tools for ending chronic homelessness.

In recent years, there has been a growing use of land at VA health facilities as sites for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) where veterans can reside with ready access to health, mental health, and other needed services. In California, this approach first was used at the VA's Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center where 147 permanent supportive housing units for chronically homeless veterans were developed under an enhanced-use lease (EUL) in partnership with non-profit organizations.

Under the Principles for a Partnership and Framework Settlement in the *Valentini v. McDonald* case reached in January 2015, the VA plans to meet the needs of homeless veterans at its 387-acre West Los Angeles Medical Center where PSH and other housing would be developed and complemented by health and other supportive services using a Housing First model. However, EUL authority cannot be used to develop PSH at the VA's West Los Angeles campus unless Federal legislation is enacted to remove a prohibition on such leases on the campus, which was enacted in 2007. This prohibition was aimed at blocking commercial development, but also blocks housing developments using EUL authority.

## **County Impact and Conclusion**

Los Angeles County has the nation's largest homeless veteran population of any local jurisdiction. In January 2014, the County alone had 4,238 homeless veterans, compared to the 1,645 homeless veterans in New York City, which ranked second to the County. The County also accounted for 15.5 percent (2,771) of the national total of 17,885 unsheltered homeless veterans who lived in places not meant for human habitation, such as streets, abandoned buildings, vehicles, or parks.

The expeditious implementation of the VA's plans for constructing PSH and providing health, mental health, and other services at the VA's West Los Angeles Medical Center would benefit the County and its veterans by significantly reducing homelessness in the County and making additional Federal resources available to meet health, mental health, and other needs of veterans.

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**Approval of this motion is consistent with the existing policy in the County's Federal Legislative Agenda to support proposals which provide additional resources for meeting the housing and related supportive service needs of special populations, such as the elderly, disabled, victims of trafficking, veterans, and mentally ill persons.**

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR  
MT:gl

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel